

Serial No.: 10/036,991
Attorney Docket No.: F-424

Patent

REMARKS

1. Status of Claims

Claims 1-15 were pending in the Application. Applicants have amended claims 1, 4 and 13. Applicants respectfully requests entry of the above amendments and consideration of the enclosed remarks. Applicants submit that no new matter is added. Accordingly, claims 1-15 will remain pending in the application.

2. Objection to the Abstract

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the Abstract of the Disclosure. Applicants have amended the Abstract of the Disclosure and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection. Similarly, applicants have amended the specification to provide the serial numbers and status of the patent applications listed on the first page. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

3. Rejections under 35 USC § 102

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by either Call, et al., (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0124664A1) or Lopez, et al. (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2003/0058099A1).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Initially, Applicants respectfully submit that Call '664 does not qualify as prior art under 35 USC 102(e).

However, solely in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite: a filtered transition area downstream of the sanitizer module.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is moot and respectfully submit that claims 1-3 are patentable over the cited reference.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to claims 1-3.

4. Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a)

Serial No.: 10/036,991
Attorney Docket No.: F-424

Patent

Starting on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 4-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly rendered obvious by Call, et al., (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0124664A1) or Lopez, et al. (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2003/0058099A1) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,191,424 to Sterling ("Sterling '424).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. However, solely in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite: a filtered transition area downstream of the sanitizer module. Claims 4 and 13 are also amended.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 4-12 are patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons discussed above with reference to claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is moot and respectfully submit that claims 4-15 are patentable over the cited references.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to claims 4-15.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to claims 1-15. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the invention as presently claimed in claims 1-15 is patentable over the cited references and in condition for allowance.

5. Conclusion Of Remarks

For at least the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this application are in condition for allowance and early and favorable action thereon is requested.

If the Examiner believes that additional issues may be resolved by a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicants at (203) 924-3180.

Serial No.: 10/036,991
Attorney Docket No.: F-424

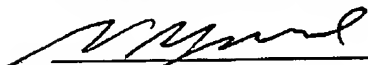
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6. Authorization

No fee is believed due with this Amendment. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for the response or credit any overpayment to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-424.

In the event that an extension of time or additional extension of time is required to make this response timely filed, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-424.

Respectfully submitted,



George M. Macdonald
Reg. No. 39,284
Attorney for Applicants
Telephone (203) 924-3180
PITNEY BOWES INC.
Intellectual Property and Technology Law Department
35 Waterview Drive, P.O. Box 3000
Shelton, CT 06484-8000